

2/7/00 Electrocuted

A 29-year-old, married, father of one, was killed; and a 27-year old co-worker seriously injured when they came into contact with 72kv power line. Both victims were construction workers on a commercial building project. The worker that was killed had been employed with the company for three years, and his co-worker for two months.

The victims were working on the roof structure of the building taking measurements. The power pole was 20 feet from the building, but the lines carrying 72kv of power ran at an angle that brought them closer to the roof. One victim was in a scissors lift holding one end of a steel tape measure, while the other victim was on the roof of the building holding the other end. The victim in the lift was in the process of raising the platform when it came into contact with the power line. He was killed instantly. The electricity traveled along the tape measurer he was holding to the co-worker on the roof. The co-worker was seriously burned, knocked off the roof, and fell approximately 20 feet to the ground.

In the last few years, the employer had been inspected several times by the Department, and found to have an excellent record of safety. This employer had a policy in their accident prevention plan that addressed the hazard of working around power lines. The worker that was killed had recently received training on the equipment. The employer was using a fall protection system on the roof where the accident occurred. The investigation is ongoing.

Questions to ask?

- Do you conduct a hazard evaluation BEFORE starting the job?
- Do you have policy for working around power lines as part of your accident prevention plan?
- Do you enforce this policy?
- Are all workers trained to keep a minimum of 10 feet between themselves and high voltage power lines?
- Do you have a fall protection work plan?
- Is it adequate for the type of work that's being done?
- Are all of your workers who may occasionally use lifting equipment, trained in its use?
- Does this training include working around overhead hazards such as power lines?